



An Action Research Study on Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Observation and its Role in Enhancing Teaching Practices

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ABSTRACT

Classroom observation is an important mechanism for strengthening instructional quality and teacher professional learning when it is implemented as a developmental rather than merely evaluative process. This school-based action research examined teachers' and school leaders' perceptions and experiences of classroom observation, with particular attention to its contribution to instructional improvement, professional growth, and the leadership practices that shape its effectiveness. A convergent mixed-methods design was employed. Quantitative data were obtained through five-point Likert-scale surveys administered to 16 teachers from Chapcha Middle Secondary School and 16 principals/school administrators from Chukha Dzongkhag. Qualitative evidence was generated through semi-structured interviews with 12 principals and 6 teachers, together with classroom observation evidence. Quantitative data were analyzed descriptively using means and standard deviations, while qualitative data were coded thematically and integrated with the survey findings through triangulation. Teachers reported a high overall perception of classroom observation ($M = 3.93$, $SD = 1.10$), particularly valuing constructive and actionable feedback ($M = 4.31$, $SD = 1.01$). Principals likewise reported a high level of effectiveness in conducting observations ($M = 4.04$, $SD = 0.89$), with the strongest emphasis on using observations to promote professional growth ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 0.96$). Across data sources, observation was associated with improved lesson preparation, reflective practice, use of teaching-learning materials, ICT integration, and professional dialogue. However, concerns relating to workload, limited time, observer preparation, fairness, teacher anxiety, and artificial lesson enactment were also evident. The study concludes that classroom observation has its greatest developmental value when clear criteria, professional trust, mentoring, reflective dialogue, and timely feedback are embedded within the process. It recommends structured observation protocols, leadership training, protected time for observation and feedback, and stronger safeguards for fairness and transparency.

Keywords: classroom observation; teacher professional development; instructional improvement; feedback; mentoring; instructional leadership; teacher perceptions; professional growth; Bhutan.

INTRODUCTION

Classroom observation is a widely used strategy for examining classroom practice, providing professional feedback, and supporting the continuous improvement of teaching. It enables school leaders and teachers to examine lesson organization, instructional methods, classroom interaction, learner engagement, and the use of teaching-learning resources in authentic instructional settings (Halim et al., 2018; Tarusha & Bushi, 2024). When observation is accompanied by purposeful feedback and professional dialogue, it can help teachers identify strengths, recognize areas for improvement, and make informed adjustments to their practice.

Internationally, standardized observation tools have gained prominence as part of broader efforts to improve teacher effectiveness and professional learning (Goe et al., 2008; Hill & Grossman, 2013). However, the developmental value of observation depends substantially on the way the process is implemented. Observation that is perceived as punitive, inconsistent, or primarily compliance-oriented may generate anxiety and



defensive teaching, whereas observation characterized by clarity, professional trust, constructive feedback, and opportunities for reflection is more likely to support authentic improvement (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

In Bhutan, the Bhutan Professional Standards for Teachers (BPST) positions classroom observation as an important component of professional practice and assigns principals and heads of departments a significant role in observing instruction and supporting teacher development (MoESD, 2020, 2021). This policy emphasis makes it important to understand not only whether classroom observations are being conducted, but also how teachers and school leaders experience the process, how observation influences actual teaching practices, and what organizational conditions strengthen or weaken its developmental purpose.

Statement of the Problem

Although classroom observation is formally embedded within teacher professional standards and school leadership practice in Bhutan, its implementation does not automatically guarantee instructional improvement. The same observation process can be experienced either as constructive professional support or as an evaluative exercise that generates apprehension, depending on the clarity of the criteria, the quality of feedback, the competence of the observer, the degree of professional trust, and the extent to which teachers are involved in reflective follow-up. This creates a practical concern for schools: observation may be procedurally completed without necessarily producing meaningful changes in teaching practice.

The issue is particularly important because classroom observation occupies a sensitive space between professional development and performance evaluation. When teachers perceive the process as judgmental, inconsistent, or insufficiently transparent, they may demonstrate temporary or artificial lesson behaviours during observed lessons rather than engage in sustained professional learning. Conversely, when feedback is specific, respectful, evidence-based, and supported through mentoring, classroom observation can become a powerful mechanism for reflective practice and instructional improvement. The challenge, therefore, is not simply whether observation occurs, but whether it is implemented in ways that teachers regard as credible, fair, and professionally useful.

Existing literature provides substantial international evidence on classroom observation, teacher evaluation, feedback, and instructional leadership; however, there remains a need for context-specific evidence that brings together the perspectives of teachers and school leaders within the Bhutanese school setting. In particular, limited integrated evidence is available on how teachers perceive the purpose and effectiveness of observation, how observed practices translate into changes in lesson preparation and pedagogy, and how principals' leadership behaviours and institutional constraints influence the quality of the process. Without such evidence, observation systems risk emphasizing procedural compliance rather than professional growth.

Accordingly, this study addressed the problem by examining classroom observation from multiple sources: teacher surveys, principal/school-leader surveys, semi-structured interviews, and classroom observation evidence. The study sought to determine the perceived effectiveness of classroom observation, identify its contribution to instructional and professional development, examine the role of school leaders in facilitating meaningful feedback, and identify constraints that may limit the developmental value of the process.

Significance of the Study

This study is significant because it provides locally grounded evidence on how classroom observation is experienced and used as a professional learning mechanism within the Bhutanese school context. Its contribution extends beyond documenting perceptions; it identifies practical conditions under which observation is more likely to support authentic instructional improvement.

For teachers, the findings highlight the importance of clear observation criteria, constructive feedback, mentoring, reflective dialogue, fairness, and professional trust. These elements can help position observation as a learning-oriented process that supports professional confidence and continuous improvement rather than as a narrowly evaluative event.



For principals, heads of departments, and other instructional leaders, the study provides evidence on leadership practices that can strengthen the quality of classroom observation. In particular, the findings emphasize timely feedback, transparent procedures, coaching-oriented conversations, appropriate follow-up, and the provision of time and professional support. The study also draws attention to structural constraints such as administrative workload and limited formal preparation for observers.

For the Ministry of Education and Skills Development and institutions responsible for school leadership and teacher development, the findings may inform the refinement of observation protocols, leadership training, professional development programmes, and implementation guidance associated with BPST. The evidence may also support greater consistency in how classroom observation is understood and practiced across schools.

For future researchers, the study contributes a context-specific mixed-methods account that may serve as a basis for larger-scale research examining classroom observation, feedback quality, teacher learning, instructional leadership, and professional trust. For students, the significance is indirect but important: observation practices that strengthen teacher reflection and instructional quality have the potential to contribute to more purposeful and responsive learning environments.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to explore how teachers and school leaders perceive and experience classroom observation practices and to examine the ways in which those practices contribute to instructional improvement and professional growth.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore teachers' perceptions of the purpose, clarity, and effectiveness of classroom observation practices.
2. To examine the influence of classroom observation on teachers' instructional practices and professional growth.
3. To analyse the role of principals and school administrators in facilitating effective classroom observation and feedback.

Research Questions

The study was guided by the following central research question:

In what ways do teachers' and school leaders' perceptions and experiences of classroom observation practices shape instructional improvement and professional growth?

The following sub-questions were used to address the central question:

1. What are teachers' perceptions of the purpose and effectiveness of classroom observation practices?
2. How does classroom observation influence teachers' instructional practices and professional growth?
3. What role do principals and school administrators play in supporting effective classroom observation and feedback?

Scope and Delimitations

The study focused on classroom observation as a professional-development and instructional-leadership practice. The quantitative strand involved 16 teachers from Chapcha Middle Secondary School and 16 principals/school administrators from Chukha Dzongkhag. The qualitative strand drew on semi-structured interviews with 12 principals and 6 teachers, together with classroom observation evidence. The inquiry was



delimited to participants' perceptions and experiences of observation, feedback, instructional improvement, and professional growth. It did not directly measure student achievement or establish causal effects of classroom observation on learning outcomes. Consequently, any references to student learning in the findings represent participants' perceptions rather than independently measured achievement effects.

Limitations of the Study

The study used a relatively small purposive sample and was conducted within a specific educational context; therefore, the findings should be interpreted analytically rather than generalized statistically to all schools in Bhutan. Survey responses may also be influenced by social-desirability bias, particularly because principals evaluated aspects of their own observation practice. In addition, the presence of an observer may temporarily influence classroom behaviour. These limitations were mitigated through the use of multiple data sources and triangulation, but they should be considered when interpreting the findings.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Classroom Observation as a Professional-Learning Practice

Classroom observation refers to the systematic examination of teaching and learning processes in authentic classroom settings. It may serve formative purposes such as reflection, coaching, professional dialogue, and instructional improvement, as well as evaluative purposes associated with accountability and professional standards. Halim et al. (2018) emphasize that observation enables teachers to gain insight into classroom functioning, recognize strengths and weaknesses, and identify possible improvements. Similarly, Tarusha and Bushi (2024) describe structured observation as a mechanism for improving teaching practice when it is connected to purposeful feedback.

The value of classroom observation is therefore not located solely in the act of observing. Its developmental potential depends on the quality of the evidence collected, the clarity of the observation framework, and the professional learning that follows the observation. Standardized tools can improve consistency and provide a shared language for discussing practice, but they are most useful when they support reflection rather than reduce complex teaching to a checklist (Hill & Grossman, 2013).

Role of Principals in Lesson Observation

Instructional leadership places principals at the centre of efforts to strengthen teaching and learning. OECD (2016) identifies classroom observation and feedback as important leadership practices for developing professional learning communities. Baldanza (2018) similarly emphasizes regular classroom presence and constructive feedback as key features of contemporary instructional leadership. Effective observation requires leaders to combine pedagogical knowledge with communication skills, professional judgment, and the capacity to build trust.

Research also suggests that school leaders influence the meaning teachers attach to observation. Leaders who frame observation as coaching, provide specific and actionable feedback, and create opportunities for reflective dialogue can strengthen teacher engagement and professional learning. In contrast, poorly communicated or highly judgmental observation may weaken trust and reduce openness to feedback. Thus, principals' responsibilities extend beyond monitoring: they include creating the organizational conditions in which teachers feel safe to examine and improve their practice (DeWitt, 2020; Dewi, 2021).

Impact on Instructional Practice and Professional Growth

Observation can contribute to professional growth by helping teachers examine lesson planning, instructional strategies, classroom management, learner engagement, assessment, and the use of teaching-learning resources. Feedback that is timely, specific, and connected to clear performance evidence is particularly important because it enables teachers to translate observation findings into practical changes (Hattie &



Timperley, 2007). Professional development is most effective when it is sustained, connected to teachers' work, and supported through opportunities for reflection and application (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017).

Observation also provides a basis for identifying professional-development needs. When leaders use observation evidence to guide mentoring, coaching, collaborative planning, and follow-up support, observation can become part of an ongoing improvement cycle rather than a one-time evaluative event. This developmental orientation is consistent with the broader intention of BPST and school leadership frameworks in Bhutan (MoESD, 2019, 2020, 2021).

Teachers' Perceptions of Classroom Observation

Teachers' perceptions strongly influence the effectiveness of observation systems. Positive perceptions are commonly associated with clarity of purpose, respectful communication, constructive feedback, fair criteria, and confidence in the observer. Where these conditions are present, teachers are more likely to regard observation as an opportunity for reflection and growth. Where they are absent, observation may generate anxiety, concerns about autonomy, or strategic performance during observed lessons rather than authentic teaching.

These concerns are particularly relevant when observation results are linked to professional evaluation. Fairness and transparency are therefore central to credible observation practice. Teachers need to understand how evidence is collected, how judgments are reached, how feedback will be used, and what support will follow. Such procedural clarity can reduce uncertainty and strengthen professional trust.

Synthesis and Research Gap

The literature consistently identifies classroom observation, constructive feedback, and instructional leadership as potentially powerful mechanisms for teacher learning. However, it also shows that observation can become counterproductive when it is experienced as punitive, inconsistent, or disconnected from meaningful follow-up. The principal gap addressed by the present study is the limited integrated evidence, within the Bhutanese school context, that combines teachers' perceptions, school leaders' perspectives, interview evidence, and classroom observation to examine both the developmental benefits and implementation constraints of observation. The study therefore contributes a context-specific account of how observation practices are experienced, how they influence teaching, and what leadership conditions are necessary for them to function as genuine professional-learning processes.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach and Design

This school-based action research employed a convergent mixed-methods design. Consistent with the convergent approach, quantitative and qualitative evidence was generated within the same broad phase of the inquiry, analysed initially as separate strands, and then brought together during interpretation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The design was selected because the research questions required both a descriptive account of the pattern and strength of participants' perceptions and an in-depth understanding of how classroom observation, feedback, and professional learning were experienced in practice.

Integration was planned at the interpretation stage rather than by merging raw datasets. Survey results were first summarized statistically, while interview and classroom-observation evidence were analysed thematically. The resulting quantitative patterns and qualitative themes were then aligned by research question and substantive theme and compared for convergence (agreement across sources), complementarity (different sources adding explanatory detail), and divergence or tension (sources indicating different experiences or interpretations). This structured comparison is presented (see Table 4.3) and forms the basis for the integrated conclusions of the study.



Table 3.1. Convergent mixed-methods design

Quantitative Strand	Integration	Qualitative Strand
Teacher survey (n = 16) Principal/school-leader survey (n = 16) Descriptive statistics: mean and SD	Separate strand analysis followed by joint-display comparison for convergence, complementarity, and divergence/tension	Semi-structured interviews: 12 principals and 6 teachers Classroom observation evidence Thematic analysis

Study Context, Participants, and Sampling

A purposive, criterion-based sampling strategy was used because participation required direct experience with classroom observation. For the teacher strand, eligible participants were teachers from Chapcha Middle Secondary School who had experienced classroom observation as part of school-based instructional supervision or professional development. For the school-leader strand, eligible participants were principals from Chukha Dzongkhag who had responsibilities related to conducting, facilitating, or managing classroom observation. The quantitative component therefore comprised 32 participants: 16 teachers and 16 principals. The qualitative component comprised semi-structured interviews with 12 principals and 6 teachers, together with classroom-observation evidence used as a supplementary source of practice-based information.

Recruitment took place after the required institutional and education-authority approvals had been obtained. Eligible participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the activities involved, confidentiality safeguards, voluntary participation, and the right to withdraw without professional disadvantage. Written informed consent was obtained before data collection. Survey administration preceded the interviews and classroom observations, although all three sources were generated within the same broad data-collection phase.

The survey and interview samples were analysed as group-level strands. Mixed-methods integration is therefore conducted at the level of aggregate survey patterns, interview themes, and classroom-observation evidence. This sampling strategy was appropriate for obtaining information-rich perspectives from participants closely connected to the phenomenon under investigation. However, because the sample was small, context-specific, and non-probabilistic, the findings are intended for analytical interpretation within comparable educational settings rather than statistical generalization to all schools in Bhutan.

Data Collection Instruments

Survey Questionnaires

Separate questionnaires were administered to teachers and principals in order to reflect their different roles in the classroom-observation process. The questionnaires operationalized the study objectives through items addressing the clarity and regularity of observation, quality and usefulness of feedback, alignment with professional standards, professional support, fairness and transparency, contribution to professional development, and perceived influence on instructional practice and student learning. Each item was rated on a five-point Likert scale anchored as 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree (see Table 3.2).

Before full administration, the instruments were reviewed for clarity, language appropriateness, relevance, and coverage of the constructs examined in the study. They were then piloted with participants from another middle secondary school who were excluded from the final sample. Feedback from the pilot was used to refine unclear wording and improve item functioning. Internal consistency was subsequently examined using Cronbach's alpha (see Table 3. 3).

For interpretation of the descriptive results, equal-width intervals were used to translate mean scores into verbal categories: 1.00-1.79 = Very Low/Strongly Disagree; 1.80-2.59 = Low/Disagree; 2.60-3.39 = Moderate/Neutral; 3.40-4.19 = High/Agree; and 4.20-5.00 = Very High/Strongly Agree. These thresholds, adapted from Pimentel (2019), were applied consistently to both teacher and principal survey results. Thus, a



mean described as ‘High’ indicates that the mean fell between 3.40 and 4.19 rather than representing an independently validated performance standard.

Table 3. 2. Criteria for interpreting Likert-scale means

Scale	Mean interval	Interpretation	Level of agreement
1	1.00-1.79	Very Low	Strongly Disagree
2	1.80-2.59	Low	Disagree
3	2.60-3.39	Moderate	Neutral
4	3.40-4.19	High	Agree
5	4.20-5.00	Very High	Strongly Agree

Note. Mean-interpretation intervals adapted from Pimentel (2019).

Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to explore participants’ experiences in greater depth and to explain patterns identified in the survey data. A common interview guide addressed the purpose and clarity of classroom observation, experiences of post-observation feedback, perceived instructional and professional benefits, professional-development needs, fairness and trust, teacher responses to being observed, leadership practices, and implementation constraints. The semi-structured format ensured consistency across participants while allowing follow-up probes when participants raised experiences requiring clarification or elaboration.

Interview evidence was documented in written transcripts for analysis. As part of member checking, transcripts were returned to participants for confirmation of accuracy before the final thematic interpretation was completed. Interview evidence was used to illuminate and contextualize the quantitative patterns rather than to generate numerical estimates of prevalence.

Classroom Observation

Classroom observation was used as a supplementary source of direct, contextual evidence on instructional practice. The observation focus included lesson preparation and organization, instructional delivery, use of teaching-learning materials, ICT integration, learner engagement, classroom management, and observable responses to professional expectations. Observation records were examined for concrete instances of these practices and were subsequently coded thematically alongside the interview data.

The observation component was not designed as a pre-test/post-test measure of teacher effectiveness and did not independently establish causal change attributable to observation. Its purpose was triangulatory: to assess whether selected practices described by participants were also evident in observed classroom activity and to identify areas where observed practice complemented or differed from participants’ perceptions. Accordingly, the results distinguish perceived benefits from practices directly documented through observation.

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

Content-related validity was addressed through review of the survey items and interview questions for language appropriateness, clarity, relevance to the research questions, and coverage of the principal domains of classroom observation examined in the study. A pilot study was conducted in another middle secondary school with participants who were not included in the final sample. The pilot was used to identify ambiguous or unclear wording, assess the practical functioning of the instruments, and refine items before full administration.

Internal consistency reliability of the survey instruments was examined using Cronbach’s alpha. The teacher questionnaire yielded $\alpha = .967$ and the principal questionnaire yielded $\alpha = .934$, indicating very high internal consistency for the items administered in this study. These coefficients support the consistency of the survey responses.



Table 3. 3. Reliability statistics of the survey questionnaires

No.	Instrument	Cronbach's alpha
1	Teacher Survey Questionnaire (overall)	0.967
2	Principal Survey Questionnaire (overall)	0.934
	Average coefficient	0.9505

Qualitative trustworthiness was strengthened through member checking and cross-checking of codes and interpretations. Interview transcripts were returned to participants for confirmation of accuracy, and the use of multiple evidence sources enabled methodological triangulation. These procedures were intended to reduce misrepresentation and strengthen confidence in the qualitative findings.

Data Collection Procedure

Data collection commenced only after approval from the Ministry of Education and Skills Development and the relevant education authorities. The sequence of data collection was as follows: first, eligible participants received study information and provided written informed consent; second, the teacher and principal questionnaires were administered; third, semi-structured interviews were conducted with the purposively selected qualitative participants; and fourth, classroom-observation evidence was compiled as a supplementary qualitative source.

This sequencing provided a transparent audit trail from recruitment and consent through strand-specific data collection and analysis to final integration. Participation was voluntary throughout, and participants were informed about the study purpose, procedures, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality protections, and their right to decline or withdraw without adverse professional consequences.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data were coded and analysed using IBM SPSS Version 22. Descriptive statistics, specifically means and standard deviations, were calculated to summarize the direction and dispersion of participants' responses. Before analysis, the dataset was screened for incomplete or inconsistent responses. Mean scores were interpreted using the five response anchors and interval thresholds (see Table 3.2).

Qualitative interview and observation evidence was analysed thematically. The process involved repeated reading of the records, initial coding of meaningful segments, comparison and grouping of related codes, development of candidate themes, review of themes against the source material, and interpretation in relation to the research questions. Observation evidence was coded with attention to directly documented classroom practices, whereas interview themes were treated as participants' accounts and perceptions.

Mixed-methods integration was conducted after completion of the strand-specific analyses. Quantitative findings and qualitative themes were organized around common substantive categories and entered into a joint display (see Table 4.3). For each category, the researchers examined whether the survey, interview, and observation evidence converged, complemented one another, or showed tension. Integrated interpretations were based on the pattern across sources rather than on any single dataset. This procedure also prevented perceived benefits reported in surveys or interviews from being presented as directly observed instructional change unless corresponding observation evidence was available.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were observed throughout the research process. Participants received clear information about the study and provided informed consent. Participation was voluntary, and participants could withdraw without negative professional consequences. Personal identifiers were removed or coded, and findings were reported in a manner intended to protect the identities of individual participants and institutions. Electronic data were stored in password-protected files accessible only to the research team. The study also sought to minimize professional risk by emphasizing that individual responses would not be used for punitive evaluation.



RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Teachers' Perceptions of the Purpose and Effectiveness of Classroom Observation

Table 4.1. Teachers' perceptions of classroom observation practices

No.	Item	N	M	SD	Interpretation
1	Post-observation feedback helps me improve my teaching practices	16	4.06	1.12	High
2	Classroom observations are conducted regularly enough to assess my performance accurately	16	3.75	1.06	High
3	The observation criteria are clear and transparent	16	3.81	1.17	High
4	Feedback from the administrator is constructive and actionable	16	4.31	1.01	Very High
5	Observation tools reflect research-based best practices	16	3.94	1.06	High
6	I feel supported by the school leader during classroom evaluations	16	3.88	1.15	High
7	The frequency of observations is sufficient to evaluate my teaching effectiveness	16	4.00	1.21	High
8	Professional-development sessions following observations help me address identified areas for improvement	16	4.00	1.03	High
9	Observation results are used fairly in teachers' professional evaluations	16	3.56	1.09	High
10	I believe observation tools contribute positively to student learning outcomes	16	4.00	1.15	High
	Grand Mean	16	3.93	1.10	High

Note. Scale: 1.00-1.79 = Very Low; 1.80-2.59 = Low; 2.60-3.39 = Moderate; 3.40-4.19 = High; 4.20-5.00 = Very High.

The teacher survey produced a grand mean of 3.93 (SD = 1.10). Under the predefined interpretive criteria (3.40-4.19 = High/Agree), this indicates an overall tendency toward agreement that classroom observation was useful and supportive. The highest-rated item concerned constructive and actionable feedback (M = 4.31, SD = 1.01), which falls within the 'Very High/Strongly Agree' interval (4.20-5.00) and suggests that teachers placed particular value on feedback that could be translated into specific instructional improvements. Post-observation feedback (M = 4.06, SD = 1.12), professional-development follow-up (M = 4.00, SD = 1.03), observation frequency (M = 4.00, SD = 1.21), and the perceived contribution of observation tools to student learning (M = 4.00, SD = 1.15) all fell within the 'High/Agree' interval.

The comparatively lower score for fairness in professional evaluation (M = 3.56, SD = 1.09), although still within the 'High' category, is important because it points to an area of relative concern. Interview evidence similarly indicated that teachers valued mentoring, reflective dialogue, and respectful feedback, while some participants expressed anxiety about being judged and concern that observation could encourage artificial lesson performance. These findings reinforce the argument that the effectiveness of observation depends on whether it is experienced as developmental and trustworthy rather than punitive (Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

Influence of Classroom Observation on Instructional Practices and Professional Growth

Interview participants perceived classroom observation as encouraging more deliberate lesson preparation, clearer lesson introductions, greater attention to instructional standards, increased use of teaching-learning materials, stronger ICT integration, and more purposeful professional reflection. These statements represent

participants' reported experiences and perceived benefits; they should not, by themselves, be interpreted as independently verified changes caused by classroom observation.

Classroom-observation evidence provided a distinct form of support. The observation records documented instances of purposeful lesson preparation, use of teaching-learning materials, ICT-supported instruction, and attention to learner engagement. They also documented areas requiring further development, including continued reliance on lecture-oriented approaches, inconsistent lesson closure, and occasional classroom-management weaknesses. Thus, the observation evidence corroborated some of the practices described in interviews while also identifying limitations that were less prominent in participants'.

The study also indicated that less-experienced teachers appeared to derive particular benefit from structured feedback and mentoring. This should be interpreted as a qualitative pattern rather than as a statistically tested group difference. Nevertheless, it aligns with BPST's emphasis on professional support, mentoring, and the progressive development of teacher competence (MoESD, 2020).

Role of Principals and School Administrators in Supporting Effective Observation and Feedback

Table 4.2. Principals' self-reported effectiveness in conducting classroom observations

No.	Item	N	M	SD	Interpretation
1	I effectively use classroom observation tools to assess teaching practices	16	4.06	0.77	High
2	I provide timely and constructive feedback after lesson observations	16	4.06	0.93	High
3	I clearly communicate the criteria used during classroom observations	16	4.00	0.82	High
4	I ensure that observation practices are aligned with professional teaching standards	16	4.19	0.91	High
5	I use lesson observation as an opportunity to promote teachers' professional growth	16	4.38	0.96	Very High
6	I allocate sufficient time and resources for meaningful lesson observations	16	3.75	0.93	High
7	I ensure that observation data are used fairly and appropriately in teacher evaluations	16	3.75	0.93	High
8	I support training and development of observers to improve the quality of classroom evaluations	16	3.81	0.83	High
9	I foster a collaborative environment between teachers and administration during lesson observation	16	4.19	0.75	High
10	The principal's involvement in lesson observation positively influences student learning outcomes	16	4.19	1.11	High
	Grand Mean	16	4.04	0.89	High

Principals reported an overall mean of 4.04 (SD = 0.89). According to the predefined scale criteria, this falls within the 'High/Agree' interval and therefore reflects a general tendency for principals to agree that they conducted classroom observation effectively. The strongest response concerned the use of observation to promote professional growth (M = 4.38, SD = 0.96), which falls within the 'Very High/Strongly Agree' interval. Alignment with professional standards, collaboration during observation, and the perceived contribution of principal involvement to student learning each recorded M = 4.19, at the upper boundary of the 'High/Agree' interval.

However, two comparatively lower areas were the allocation of sufficient time and resources (M = 3.75, SD = 0.93) and the fair and appropriate use of observation data in evaluation (M = 3.75, SD = 0.93). Interviews provided important context for these results: principals identified administrative workload, limited time, and

insufficient formal training in observation techniques as constraints. Several reportedly relied substantially on prior teaching experience rather than specialized observer preparation. These findings suggest that positive leadership intentions alone may not be sufficient; effective observation also requires organizational capacity, protected time, and professional preparation.

Integrated Triangulation of Findings

Table 4.3. Joint display integrating quantitative survey, interview, and classroom-observation evidence

Theme	Quantitative survey evidence	Qualitative interview evidence	Classroom-observation evidence	Integrated inference
Constructive feedback	Teacher: $M=4.31$, $SD=1.01$ (Very High). Principal feedback item: $M=4.06$, $SD=0.93$ (High).	Teachers and leaders emphasized specific feedback, mentoring, and reflective dialogue.	Records showed immediate, solution-focused feedback linked to practice.	Convergence: feedback is consistently identified as central to professional learning.
Instructional practice	Teacher overall perception: $M=3.93$, $SD=1.10$ (High).	Participants perceived gains in preparation, resources, ICT use, and reflection.	Observed lessons showed preparation, TLM and ICT use, but also lecture dependence and weak lesson closure.	Complementarity: observations support some reported practices but also reveal areas for improvement; perceived benefits are not causal evidence.
Professional growth	Principal professional-growth item: $M=4.38$, $SD=0.96$ (Very High). Teacher PD follow-up: $M=4.00$, $SD=1.03$ (High).	Interviews linked observation with coaching, mentoring, goal setting, and reflection.	Less-experienced teachers appeared responsive to structured feedback.	Convergence with caution: evidence supports a developmental role, but experience-level differences were qualitative, not statistically tested.
Fairness and trust	Teacher fairness item: $M=3.56$, $SD=1.09$; principal fairness item: $M=3.75$, $SD=0.93$ (both High but comparatively lower).	Participants raised concerns about judgment, fairness, anxiety, and artificial lesson performance.	Some performative or artificial lesson enactment was evident.	Convergence: fairness, transparency, and trust remain areas for strengthening.
Time, resources, and observer preparation	Principal time/resources item: $M=3.75$, $SD=0.93$ (High but comparatively lower).	Leaders cited workload, limited time, and insufficient formal observer preparation.	Depth and consistency of observation and follow-up varied with context.	Complementarity: organizational capacity and observer preparation shape implementation quality.

The joint display demonstrates both convergence and complementarity across the three forms of evidence. Constructive feedback and professional growth showed the clearest convergence: survey respondents expressed strong agreement with these aspects, interview participants described them as central to useful



observation, and classroom evidence documented practices consistent with feedback-oriented professional support. Instructional improvement showed a more qualified pattern. Participants reported benefits in preparation, resource use, ICT integration, and reflection, and observations documented examples of several of these practices; however, observations also revealed continuing weaknesses such as lecture dependence, inconsistent lesson closure, and classroom-management challenges. The integrated interpretation therefore distinguishes perceived improvement from directly documented classroom practice.

Across the datasets, fairness, trust, workload, time, and observer preparation emerged as recurring conditions that could strengthen or constrain the developmental value of observation. The integrated evidence therefore supports a developmental model in which observation, evidence-based feedback, teacher reflection, mentoring, and follow-up professional support function as a connected cycle. At the same time, the cross-sectional and descriptive nature of the study does not permit causal attribution of observed practices or perceived improvements solely to classroom observation.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

This study examined teachers' and school leaders' perceptions of classroom observation and its role in instructional improvement and professional growth. The findings indicate that classroom observation is generally perceived positively within the study context. Teachers especially valued constructive and actionable feedback, while principals strongly endorsed observation as a mechanism for promoting professional growth. Triangulated evidence suggested improvements in lesson preparation, use of teaching-learning materials, ICT integration, reflective practice, and professional dialogue.

The findings also demonstrate that the effectiveness of observation is conditional. Administrative workload, limited time, insufficient observer preparation, concerns about fairness, teacher anxiety, and artificial lesson enactment can reduce the developmental value of the process. Consequently, classroom observation should not be treated as a stand-alone evaluative event. Its strongest contribution occurs when it is embedded within a coherent professional-learning process characterized by clear expectations, credible evidence, respectful communication, reflective dialogue, mentoring, and follow-up support.

Because the study used a small purposive sample and did not directly measure student achievement, the findings should be understood as context-specific evidence rather than as proof of causal effects across Bhutanese schools. Nevertheless, the convergence of teacher, leader, interview, and observation evidence provides a useful basis for strengthening classroom observation practice within similar school contexts.

Recommendations

First, Schools should adopt structured observation cycles that include pre-observation clarification where appropriate, focused evidence collection, timely post-observation feedback, teacher reflection, and documented follow-up support. Next, Principals, heads of departments, and other observers should receive formal training in observation techniques, evidence-based feedback, coaching, mentoring, professional dialogue, and the fair application of observation criteria. Then, Observation criteria and the intended use of observation evidence should be communicated clearly to teachers in order to strengthen transparency, predictability, and professional trust. After that, Schools should protect sufficient time for meaningful classroom observation and post-observation conferencing so that administrative workload does not reduce the process to procedural compliance. Similarly, Observation data should be used primarily to support instructional improvement and professional learning; where observation contributes to formal evaluation, safeguards for consistency, fairness, and transparency should be strengthened. Moreover, Professional-development plans should be linked to patterns identified through observation so that feedback leads to concrete opportunities for mentoring, peer learning, targeted training, and follow-up review. Finally, Future research should use larger and more diverse samples across multiple Dzongkhags and should examine longer-term changes in instructional practice. Where feasible, future studies may also investigate links between strengthened observation systems and independently measured student-learning indicators.

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